



BAHRAIN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Defending and promoting human rights in Bahrain



Children Under Attack

*Violations Against the Convention of the
Rights of the Child in Bahrain*

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About Us



BAHRAIN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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The Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR) is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization, registered with the Bahraini Ministry of Labor and Social Services since July 2002. Despite an order by the authorities in November 2004 to close it, the BCHR is still functioning after gaining wide internal and external support for its struggle to promote human rights in Bahrain.

The co-founder and former President of the BCHR is Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, who is currently serving a life sentence in prison for charges related to freedom of speech. The current President is Nabeel Rajab, who is serving a two year prison sentence for his work as a human rights defender. The Acting President is Maryam Al-Khawaja.

Note:

The cases outline below represent only a portion of the total number of violations that the Bahraini authorities are perpetrating against children. Limitation on the BCHR's capacity, and a general fear among victims of further reprisals for reporting incidents, determine this report to be a sampling of the total number of incidents.

For more information, please visit our website:

www.bahrainrights.org

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Introduction

Since before Bahrain's mass pro-democracy movement, the authorities have committed serious violations against the Convention of the Rights of the Child which it ratified in 1992. In 2011, The Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed its concern "at the considerable delay since 2002 in the adoption of the Child Rights" and it called upon the state party "to adopt, as a matter of urgency, the Child Rights" and other laws concerning the family and civil society. However, no progress has been made to date in this area. On the contrary, the government of Bahrain has since committed serious violations of the convention (See: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/co/CRC.C.BHR.CO.2-3.doc>). Children in Bahrain have been victims of extra-judicial killings, torture, arrest, detention and harsh prison sentences.

The Bahrain Center for Human Rights has documented that at least fourteen children under the age of 18 have been killed as a result of the excessive use of force by security forces since the mass pro-democracy protests began in 2011.

| Name | Age | Area | Date of Death | Cause of Death |
|------------------------------|---------|---------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| Husain Ali Ebrahim | 16 | Al Dahi | 2/13/2013 | Direct shooting |
| Qasim Habib | 8 | Karbala | 1/26/2013 | Teenage/ Respiratory failure |
| Ali Rasbi | 16 | Samahaj | 11/9/2012 | Run over |
| Ali Hassan Nourah | 17 | Saddaf | 9/28/2012 | Direct shooting |
| Husain Al Haidad | 16 | Mubaraq | 8/7/2012 | Direct shooting |
| Yahya Younis Ahmed | 1 Month | | 3/5/2012 | Teenage/ Respiratory failure |
| Yasun Jassim AlAsfooc | 14 | Masnoon/Alek | 1/20/2012 | Teenage/ Respiratory failure |
| Sayed Hamid: Sayed Saied | 15 | Sitra | 12/31/2011 | Direct shooting |
| Sajida Faisal | 5 days | Blud ARJadecm | 12/11/2011 | Teenage/ Respiratory failure |
| Ali Yousif Raish | 16 | Sitra | 11/15/2011 | Run over |
| Ahmed Jaber AlQattan | 16 | Shakhsa | 10/6/11 | Direct shooting |
| Ali Alshakhi | 14 | Sitra | 8/31/11 | Direct shooting |
| Mohammed Abdalhussein Fathan | 6 | Sitra | 4/30/11 | Teenage/ Respiratory failure |
| Sayed Ahmad Sa'eed Shams | 15 | Suez | 3/90/11 | Direct shooting |

In January 2012, Bahrain was elected as Vice-President of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (see: <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/490966>). This position was awarded despite the fact that dozens of children in Bahrain have been deprived from education, and schools have been attacked and tear gassed by the security forces. Recently, the attacks on children have further escalated. The BCHR is receiving reports with greater frequency of children being arrested and reportedly tortured. Detained children are subjected to torture and ill-treatment in prison, and a number of children are being deprived from completing their studies. Many are being tried in a judicial system which is neither independent nor fair; at least three children have been charged under the internationally criticized terrorism law and sentenced to up to ten years in prison.

Arrests & Detentions

The BCHR documented that there were at least nineteen arrests of children in the month of May, 2013. The authorities' house raids and attacks on villages are escalating, and have become a near-daily occurrence. The number of reports of children being arrested during these attacks is increasing as well.

"All detained children over the age of 14 are kept in adult prisons"



Photo: Jawad Foad Jahromi

Jawad Fouad Jahromi, 16 years old, is a student in Al Jabriya Secondary School. According to his family, he was arrested on 04 June 2013 at 02:00 am when his house was raided by more than twenty members of the security forces and masked men in civilian clothes. The family's front door was broken and Jahromi was arrested from his bed without being presented with an arrest warrant or providing any reason to why he was arrested. When he called his family, he informed them that he was interrogated, and that three charges were brought against him, but he was only informed of two of the charges, which were rioting and blocking a main road. He is currently detained in the Dry Dock prison.

On 04 June 2013, five houses were raided in Noaim village.

Abdulla Mahmood, 17 years old, was staying at his grandparent's house when masked men in civilian clothes accompanied by security forces broke into the house, entering from the roof, and arrested Abdulla. He was studying for his final exams at the time, which were starting the next morning. His family went to Noaim police station to ask about his whereabouts, but the authorities denied having him in custody and refused to provide any further information. It was after approximately forty hours when they first received a phone call from their son.



Photo: Abdulla Mahmood

Hassan Humaidan, 17 years old, is a student at Al Jabriya Secondary School. On 15 April 2013, he was called to the school administration office, where police officers arrested him and took him away in front of his fellow students.

All detained children above 14 years of age are kept in adult prisons and treated like adults; some are even detained in the same cell with prisoners convicted on criminal charges. Prisons in Bahrain are generally in very poor conditions, prisoners are deprived from the most basic provisions, and many are denied medical treatment. Children in these prisons are subjected to the same ill-treatment and suffer from the same poor conditions without any exception.

Torture & Violations Inside Prisons

Torture in Bahrain is a systematic policy. The widespread culture of impunity adds to the frequency of torture cases, whether during arrest t, in unofficial torture centers, or in prison. Many cases were reported to the BCHR of children being tortured and/or ill-treated at the hands of Bahrain's security forces inside and outside prisons.

A recent torture case was the one witnessed by Nabeel Rajab, the detained President of the BCHR. Rajab witnessed children and youth being tortured by the prison guards and requested the visit of the ICRC to testify as to what he witnessed. **Jehad Sadeq** and **Mustafa Al Meqdad**, both 16 years-old, were two of the eight children who Nabeel Rajab witnessed being tortured. After their torture, they were placed in solitary confinement for more than one week, during which their families did not hear from them (read more: <http://bahrainrights.org/en/node/6134>).



Photo: Mustafa Al Meqdad (left) and Jehad Sadeq (right)

Ali Omran, 17 years old, was violently arrested on 14 April 2012 during a warrant-less house raid. He was reportedly thrown from the roof of a house, dragged on the ground, beaten and kicked all the way to the police vehicle. He was subjected to enforced disappearance and his family did not know about his whereabouts for approximately 48 hours during which he was being interrogated in the Criminal Investigative Directorate without the presence of his lawyer. His family says that in the CID he was handcuffed from behind, blindfolded, verbally assaulted, threatened to be killed, and subjected to various types of torture, including beating, punching and simulated drowning in water. Ali was reportedly taken to the Ministry of Interior hospital due to the torture that he was subjected to. The family was only able to see him after more than two weeks; they reported that the torture marks were apparent on his body, that his head was wounded and both his legs and hands fingers were wounded from falling and being dragged. Ali was then sentenced to ten years in prison in an unfair trial. He was also tortured with Jehad and Mustafa as witnessed by Nabeel Rajab.

Trials & Harsh Sentences

There are dozens of children that were charged and are now awaiting trials. Some of these children are already imprisoned, others are facing the risk of being detained. Children are not only being tried in criminal court but a number are being tried under the internationally condemned terrorism law and harsh sentences are being given by the judges without solid evidence and with no regards to their age. It is important to note here that Bahrain's judicial system is neither independent nor fair. It unfortunately also does not adhere to the international standards of fair trials.



Photo: Ebrahim Al-Meqdad (left) and Jihad Sadeq (left)

Jihad Sadeq, 16 years old, and **Ebrahim Al Meqdad**, 15 years old, were the first two children in Bahrain to be tried under the internationally criticized terrorism law. Both children were arrested on 23 July 2012. They were prevented from contact with their families for approximately 48 hours and were interrogated without legal representation; their families asked about them in several police stations, but the authorities denied having the children. Both

boys were also reportedly ill-treated and beat-

en during interrogation. The public prosecution ordered their detention for 60 days, they were taken to the Dry Dock prison, which is an adult prison, and have been detained there since their arrest. On 04 April 2013, Jihad and Ebrahim were sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment based on confessions extracted under duress during the time of their arrested. Both boys are appealing the harsh sentences, and have now been detained for more than ten months (see: <http://bahrain-rights.org/en/node/6155>).

Hussain Al-Hawaj is now 16 years old. He was arrested at the age of 15 on 07 December 2012 with Mohammed Al Shwaikh and Hussain Al Saqqai, who were both 13 years-old at the time. They were arrested following clashes between protesters and police in Manama, although no evidence has been presented that they were taking part in the clashes. Hussain was near his house when a police patrol arrested him. The security forces took him to the local police station where he was interrogated without informing his family of his whereabouts, and without the presence of a lawyer. The public prosecution ordered his detention for



Photo: Hussain Al-Hawaj

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fifteen days which was later extended. Al-Hawaj was taken to the Dry Dock prison where he has been detained since. On 09 June 2013, Hussain was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment, based on confessions extracted under duress. Both his lawyer and his family told the BCHR that another boy in prison was tortured in front of Hussain to scare him into confession. He has fallen one year behind in his studies while in prison and stands to fall even further behind (see: <http://bahrainrights.org/en/node/5581> and <http://bahrainrights.org/en/search/node/child?page=2>).

“Hussain was sentenced to five years’ imprisonment, based on confessions extracted from him under torture.”



Photo: Mohammed Abdulla

Mohammed Abdulla, 17 years old, was arrested on 26 April 2013. His first hearing at court was on 9 June 2013. His lawyer, Zainab Abdulaziz, stated that the case was postponed until 19 June 2013 and that he was charged with illegal gathering, rioting, and possession of molotov cocktails. All of these charges are denied by Mohammed. It is currently exams period in Bahrain, but the courts and the authorities are not taking this into consideration. Mohammed was scheduled to take one of his exams on the same day of his hearing, but he was forced to miss the exam.

Deprivation from Education

Depriving children from an education appears to be a systematic policy of the authorities in Bahrain, and this practice has escalated recently during examination periods. Jalila Al Salman, a previous political detainee, a torture survivor and a member of the dissolved Bahrain Teachers Association, stated that 150 exam papers were sent to the prison on one day, which speaks to the high number of detained students. Some of the reasons that these children have been deprived of their education includes the following reasons:

1. Incarceration, and denying students the opportunity to take exams in prison.
2. Parents afraid of sending their children to school due to tear gas attacks and harassment by the security forces.
3. Receiving summons from the public prosecutor, and going into hiding.
4. The targeting of parents, which leaves children in a damaged psychological state.
5. The periods of locking down of certain areas where security forces prevent children from attending school; some schools have even been closed by the authorities.
6. Arresting children from school.

It is been reported that at least nine secondary school students have been expelled from school after being sentenced on politically motivated charges:

| Name | Sentence | Additional details |
|-----------------------------|----------|---|
| Jassim Mohammed Al Mokhoder | 3 years | |
| Ahmed Waleed | 6 months | He was arrested in 2013 for the second time |
| Mohammed Meftah | | |
| Hasan Jaffer Aziz | 1 years | He was arrested in 2013 for the second time |
| Ahmed Abdulmahdi | | |
| Alli Hasan Ebrahim | 6 months | |
| Zuhair Ebrahim | | He was arrested in 2013 for the second time |
| Salah Salman Isa | 1 year | |
| Qassim Al Hulaibi | | |

Source: http://bh-mirror.no-ip.org/article.php?id=9638&cid=73&utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=facebook



Photo: Younis, Sadiq and Jassim Ashour

Jassim Ashour, 16 years old, comes from a family that has been continuously targeted by the authorities. He has two brothers, Sadiq and Younes, both in prison. Jassim was summoned several times and interrogated on the whereabouts of his brother Younis when the latter was in hiding. He has been targeted with attacks by the authorities several times, and he was in and out of hiding. He is one of the top students in his class, however, he has recently not been able to attend school on regular basis which has greatly affected his education (www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/6123).

Abdulla Hasan, 16 years old, is another top student with a GPA of 97%. He was arrested on 14 March 2013 from his village and accused of illegal gathering, a charge he denied. Abdulla was interrogated in the public prosecution without legal representation and was given thirty days detention under investigation. He was recently sentenced to four months in prison. His detention has caused him to be absent many days this year, and has had a huge impact on his education (see: www.bahrain-right.org/en/node/5685).



Photo: Abdulla Hasan



Photo: Aqeel Mahdi

Aqeel Mahdi, who is 16 years old and from the village of Mahooz, was arrested on 22 April 2013 from Al Jabriya secondary school when he fell near the schools' gate. He was allegedly severely beaten and falsely accused of rioting and illegal assembly. Aqeel has chronic diabetes and because of negligence by the authorities and lack of routine in providing his insulin dosis, his health has deteriorated and he is suffering from regular headaches and impaired vision at times. Chronic diabetes if left untreated or treated inadequately will lead to chronic complications affecting the vision and can cause permanent blindness. The prison administration did not allow Mahdi to take four of his exams, arguing that his name is not on the list despite his family completing all of paperwork necessary for him to take his exams.

Many schools have been attacked by security forces, such as Al Jabirya Secondary school, which was attacked after students began a peaceful spontaneous protest in front of the school's administration for arrested a student from the school premises. Security forces attacked students inside the school with tear-gas, rubber bullet and sound grenades. Several injuries and arrests were reported (<http://bahrainrights.org/en/node/5703>).



Teargas Fired Inside Al Jabirya School

In a separate incident, on 09 June 2013, students from Sitra elementary school were attacked by security forces (images below) when leaving the school after finishing their exams. The security forces threw teargas canisters at them without any apparent reason. (Watch a video of the attack: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtS7BM3xXDw>)



Photo: Students attacked by teargas after school



Photo: A student who tried to escape the attack was struck by a car and injured.

Victims of Collective Punishment

Children are always victims of the authorities' collective punishment policy. Security forces carry out daily attack on villages and have been indiscriminately and excessively shooting tear gas as well as other types of weapons which have injured and harmed children in those areas.

In August 2012, Physicians for Human Rights released a report about the excessive use of teargas in Bahrain. It stated that the government of Bahrain used teargas as a weapon which resulted in "the maiming, blinding, and even killing of civilian protesters, and must stop at once while the government reassesses the use of such toxic chemical agents." The report documented many cases including cases of children. (<http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/library/reports/weaponizing-tear-gas.html#sthash.65F1UdXI.dpuf>).



Photo: A young child displays a tear-gas canister fired in his neighborhood

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The use of teargas has escalated since. On 16 June 2013, the February 14th Coalition called on all Bahrainis to sit in front of their homes as a form of peaceful protest. Shortly after people sat outside their homes, security forces started attacking them, excessively using teargas to force people inside. Numerous children were exposed to the tear gas attacks.



Photo: A teenager runs through clouds of teargas

The photo to the left is of a teenager running away from clouds of teargas shot in his neighborhood by security forces. These two photos are just a sample of many cases reported very on frequent basis.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The Government of Bahrain has committed numerous grave violations of many articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and has ignored all of the committee's recommendations. The escalation of the attacks on children, without any regard to their human rights, indicates that the authorities do not see any consequences for their actions. This is also an indication that Bahrain's security forces have been authorized, whether directly or indirectly, to commit these crimes, as no member of the government has to date has faced accountability.

Recommendations to the Committee on the Rights of the Child as well as close allies of Bahrain:

Put pressure on the Government of Bahrain to:

1. Immediately stop the practice of arbitrarily detaining children
2. Immediately release all child detainees. If the authorities are able to produce independently verifiable evidence to implicate any child's involvement in a crime requiring punishment according to international laws, then they should be prosecuted in a trial consistent with the international standards of a fair trial with appropriate consideration for their age.
3. Initiate an urgent and independent investigation into all cases of torture and assault against children and juveniles, and bring the perpetrators and implementers of such crimes to justice.
4. Provide full medical care and psychological support for the victims of these violations, and provide them with suitable compensation.
5. Immediately stop the use of indiscriminate excessive force as a form of collective punishment in residential areas.
6. Immediately stop attacks on schools and educational institutions and allow children access to education without fear of arrest or harm.

7. Stop placing children on “wanted lists” which forces them into hiding out of fear of arrest and ill treatment.
8. Stop targeting the children in families where older siblings or parents are wanted by the authorities as a method of blackmail draw the individuals out of hiding.
9. Detain children, in cases in which there is independent and verifiable evidence that a child has committed a crime, in special detention centers for children and juveniles, that are under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and not Ministry of Interior or any other security or defense institutions.
10. Adhere to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and implement all of the recommendations of the Committee of Child Rights issued in 2002.
11. Take all measures to ensure that children and juveniles in detention or trial do not lose their right to basic education to guarantee them a bright future far from deprivation and loss.